

Four Sumerian Epics about Aratta

[Introduction](#), by R. Bedrosian

[Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta](#), translated by S. Cohen

[Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdana](#), summarized by S. N. Kramer

[Enmerkar and Lugulbanda](#), summarized by S. N. Kramer

The Wikipedia entry, [Aratta](#), has a good summary with more recent translations of the texts.

Introduction

The following remarks about Aratta are from pages 19-21 of the article *Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus in Ancient Mythologies*, by Robert Bedrosian. The complete article may be read online and/or downloaded in various formats from Internet Archive (archive.org): [Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus in Ancient Mythologies](#) (1993).

[19] Aratta was a city, city-state, or country with which Sumerians had close trade and religious ties in the third millennium B.C. Its location is not known. Of four general sites suggested for Aratta, two are located in eastern Asia Minor: the Van-Urmia area and the Ayrarat district of historical Armenia. The Anshan-Hamadan area of western Iran was the choice of S. Cohen who translated one of four sources to mention Aratta, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*. However, since the publication of that work (1973), several of the criteria he used for locating Aratta have been challenged (78).

Aratta, apparently, was under the special protection of the Sun god's daughter, Inanna, the goddess of love and war. In "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta," the goddess and/or her statue were taken from Aratta to the Sumerian city of Uruk by the ruler of Uruk, Enmerkar. Now believing himself to have the goddess' protection, the Sumerian king challenged the lord of Aratta. Enmerkar ordered him to send to Sumer precious metals, precious stones, building materials and the craftsmen to transform them into shrines (79). The lord of Aratta is willing to provide the materials if Enmerkar will send him large amounts of barley. When the barley arrives in Aratta, its lord unexpectedly refuses to fulfill his part of the agreement. After ten years, Enmerkar again sends his herald to Aratta. This time, the lord of Aratta challenges Enmerkar to select one of his champions to fight in single combat with one of Aratta's champions. Enmerkar accepts. Because his response was lengthy and his herald was "heavy of mouth," Enmerkar inscribed his message on [20] clay tablets and sent them to Aratta with his herald. The poet implies that this was the beginning of writing (80). However, at this point the famine, which apparently had been plaguing Aratta, lifts and Aratta's ruler takes courage, believing Inanna had not really abandoned him. Although the ending is fragmentary, Aratta eventually seems to provide the materials and craftsmen.

In a second Sumerian myth, "Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdana," the lord of Aratta demands the submission of Enmerkar, king of Uruk, and the return of the goddess Inanna to her home in Aratta. Enmerkar refuses and demands Aratta's submission. The lord of Aratta consults with his advisors who urge him to capitulate, which he angrily refuses to do. Then his priest comes forward and boasts that he will subdue Uruk and other territories through magic. The lord of Aratta delightedly rewards the priest and sends him to Uruk. But the priest is assassinated there; and the lord of Aratta submits to Uruk (81).

Aratta is mentioned again in a third, briefer story known as "Lugulbanda and Enmerkar." In this myth, Enmerkar of Uruk is under military attack from the Martu people. Enmerkar desperately sends his messenger, Lugulbanda, to Aratta to the goddess Inanna, here called his sister. Inanna's response is unclear (82). However, it appears that Aratta again supplied Enmerkar with metals, precious stones, and craftsmen; and there is a suggestion that the materials were

transported to Uruk by river (83). Finally, Aratta appears in a fourth myth, "Lugulbanda and Mount Hurum." Enmerkar and his army are traveling to Aratta to make it a vassal state. *En route* they stop at Mount Hurum where Lugulbanda becomes ill and "dies." His comrades place his body on Mount Hurum, [21] intending to retrieve it after their war in Aratta. However, Lugulbanda was not really dead. After praying to the sun, moon, and the star Venus, he emerges from his trance and wanders the highlands. Unfortunately, the ending of this story is lost (84).

The four myths outlined above portray Aratta as a wealthy and militarily powerful state with which Sumer had relations from very early times. It was located some distance from Sumer and protected by its forbidding mountains, but it was not so distant as to prevent trade relations. Aratta had building materials, precious stones, metals and craftsmen skilled in their transformation. Aratta also had primacy with regard to the religion of the mother goddess, Inanna, who resided in Aratta, was the patron of that state, and was taken or lured south to Sumerian cities. Uruk and Aratta also were in contest for military superiority—each demanding the submission of the other. The method of transporting the "stones of the mountain" from Aratta to Uruk and of transporting grain from Uruk to Aratta seems consistent with such trade historically between the Armenian highlands and areas to its south, namely, by boat from Aratta south, and by pack animal from Uruk north. If Aratta is indeed located in eastern Asia Minor, the general implication of the Aratta cycle of myths is that Aratta played a seminal role in the development of religion in Sumer, as well as in the construction of its cult structures; and that trade and diplomacy between the two states was of such importance that writing was developed specifically for them.

Notes

78 On the location of Aratta: S. Cohen, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* (Un. of Penn. Ph.D. dissertation, 1973 University Microfilms), pp. 13-24, 127; S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago, 1963), p. 269 placed Aratta in northwestern Iran near the Caspian Sea; G. Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland* (Naples, 1980) identified Aratta with Shahr-i Suxta in southern Iran; M. Kavoukjian, *Armenia, Subartu, and Sumer* (Montreal, 1987), pp. 57-81 identified Aratta with the Metsamor metallurgical complex in the Ayrarat valley. S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford, 1989), p. 129 n. 53, observes that the adjective *arattu* ("wonderfully wrought") originally meant "made in Aratta." It is noteworthy that the goddess Ishtar (herself connected to eastern Asia Minor) when trying to win Gilgamesh's love, offers him a golden chariot drawn by dragons, and a home with an *arattu* threshold, Dalley, p. 77.

79 *Enmerkar*, lines 25-87, pp. 113-16; lines 124-27, p. 118; lines 196-205, pp. 121-22; lines 281-93, p. 126. The metals included gold, silver, copper, tin (lines 18, 196-99); timber included boxwood (lines 131, 203), cedar/cypress (line 401), pine (line 403) and poplar "the wood for chariots" (line 404), Cohen, pp. 131-32.

80 *Enmerkar*, lines 323-499, pp. 118-36; lines 500-505, pp. 136-37: "The emissary, his mouth (being) heavy, was not able to repeat (it). The lord of Kulaba patted clay and wrote the message like (on a present-day) tablet. Formerly, the writing of messages on clay was not established. Now, with [the sun god] Utu's bringing forth the day, verily, this was so." This myth also refers to the confusion of tongues, lines 150-55, p. 119.

81 S. N. Kramer, *Sumerians*, pp. 272-73.

82 *Ibid.*, pp. 273-74.

83 Cohen, pp. 23-24. The timber cut by Gilgamesh and Enkidu was also transported south by boat, see note 65 above. [65 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, N. K. Sandars, trans. (N.Y., 1972), pp. 83-84. The cut timber was sent down river to Mesopotamia by raft, Dalley, *Myths*, pp. 76-77, 84-85. This is the same method of transportation that Herodotus (*History*, Book I.194) described Armenians using in the 5th century B.C.]

84 Kramer, *Sumerians*, pp. 275-76 places Mount Hurum "in the neighborhood of Lake Van."

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ENMERKAR AND THE LORD OF ARATTA

Sol Cohen

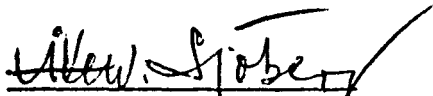
A DISSERTATION

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1. [City, majestic bull, carrying vigor and awesome splendor,]
2. [Kulaba, shelter [of the land],
3. The far reach of the sun, site where destiny [is] determined,
4. Uruk, great "mountain", in the midst of [heaven?.....]?
5. (There) the Evening Meal of the great seat of heaven [is set].
6. On that faraway day, [when] (its) fate [had been determined]:
7. Uruk-Kulaba's E[anna].....]
8. The Grand Masters let it be with an uplifted head.
9. The early overflow which yields carp,
10. The rain which brings forth dappled barley,
11. Were then increased in Uruk-Kulaba.
12. When the mountain-land (of) Dilmun was not yet,
13. When the Eanna of Uruk-Kulaba was well founded,
14. The holy Gipar of In[anna]
15. In the Brickwork of Kulaba shone forth like the glitter in
the lode,
16. [.....] had not undertaken the [task] (thus) traffic was
not engaged in,
17. [...] had not undertaken the [task] (thus) the commissioning
of traveling merchants was not practiced;
18. [Gold, s[ilver], copper, tin, lumps of lapis lazuli,
19. [And mountain stones] - all these were not brought down from
their mountain (sources).
20. [The people of Aratta] were not bathing for the festival,
21. [.....] does not dwell,
22. [.....] passed the time.

23. [.....]
24. [.....]
25. [When the city of Aratta] was colorfully adorned,
26. [Ezaginna], the [holy] site, was made of pure lapis[lazuli],
27. [in its] interior, beautifully formed like a white celtis-tree
bearing exuberance,
28. For Inanna, the lord of Aratta
29. Donned the golden head-crown.
30. (But) he did not please her like the lord of Kulaba.
31. (Therefore,) Aratta, like the Shrine Eanna-Gipar,
the holy site -
32. Like the Brickwork of Kulaba-did not build (an edifice) for
holy Inanna.
33. At that time, the lord chosen by Inanna in (her) heart,
34. Chosen by Inanna in (her) sacred heart from the bright
mountain,
35. Enmerkar, the son of Utu,
36. To his sister, the lady benefactress of desires,
37. To holy Inanna made a plea:
38. "O my sister, for Uruk may Aratta,
39. Fashion artfully gold (and) silver on my behalf,
40. [Let them cut] the pure lapis lazuli from the lumps,
41. The brightness of the pure lapis lazuli[.....]
42. In Uruk a holy "mountain" [let them lavishly decorate].
43. The house [descending] from heaven- your [place]
of worship-

44. [The Shrine E^ahna - let [Aratta] build;
45. Of the holy Gipa^r - your abode -
46. Its interior, let Aratta artfully fashion;
47. In it, may I - the radiant youth may I be embraced?
[by you].
48. Let Aratta, on my behalf, place (its) neck (under)
the yoke for Uruk.
49. Let the people of Aratta,
50. [Bring down] for me the mountain-stones from their
mountain (-sources),
51. Build the Urugal for me, set up the great seat for me,
52. Cause the great seat - the abode of the gods -
to shine forth for me,
53. Make my me flourish in Kulaba,
54. Build up Apsu for me like a holy "mountain",
55. Make Eridu lustrous for me like the mountain range,
56. Cause the Shrine Apsu to shine forth for me like the
glitter in the lode.
57. When in the midst of Apsu I declare praise,
58. When I bring the me from Eridu,
59. When, in lordship, I am adorned with the crown like a
purified shrine,
60. When I don the holy head-crown in Uruk-Kulaba,
61. As the provider of the Urugal, may I (then) be brought into
the Gipa^r,

62. (And) as the provider of the Gipar, may I (afterwards)
be brought into the Urugal;
63. May the people marvel admiringly,
64. May Utu witness it in joy."
65. [There]upon, the delightful splendor of the bright heaven,
the lady who regards the "mountain",
66. Innin whose kohl is Amaushumgalanna,
67. Inanna, the lady of all the lands,
68. Called to Enmerkar, the son of Utu:
69. "Come Enmerkar, (for) counsel I would offer you,
let my counsel be taken,
70. A word I would speak to you, let it be heard!
71. Choose from the troops, as an emissary,
one eloquent of speech and endowed with endurance,
72. Let him acquire the important message of eloquent
Inanna in (its) me on her behalf,
73. Let him bring it up into the Zubi Mountain,
74. Let him descend with it from the Zubi Mountain.
75. (While from) Susa to the Anshan mountain-land,
76. For her, they will humbly salute with greetings like mice,
77. (In) the great mountain ranges, the teeming multitudes
78. Will grovel in the dust for her,
79. Aratta will, on your behalf, place (its) neck (under) the
yoke for Uruk.
80. After the people of Aratta
81. Will have brought down the mountain stones from their
mountain (-sources),

82. They will build the Urugal for you, will set up the
great seat for you,
83. Will cause the great seat, the abode of the gods,
to shine forth for you;
84. Will make your me flourish in Kullaba,
85. Will build up Apsu for you like a holy "mountain",
86. Will make Eridu lustrous for you like the mountain range,
87. Will cause the Shrine Apsu to shine forth for you like
the glitter in the lode.
88. When in the midst of Apsu you declare praise,
89. When you bring the me from Eridu,
90. When you are adorned in lordship like a purified shrine,
91. When you don the holy head-crown in Uruk-Kulaba,
92. As the [provider] of the Urugal, you will be brought into
the Gipar,
93. (And) as the provider of the Gipar, you will (afterwards)
be brought into the Urugal;
94. [The people] will marvel admiringly,
95. [Utu] will look upon you in joy.
96. Since the people of Aratta,
97. On this [day], will have undertaken to transport
continuously -
98. After having [arrived in the morning and evening -
99. In the place of Dumuzi where the ewes, kids and lambs
are numerous[?],
100. In the akalag (-fields) and in the fields of Dumuzi,

101. They will bend their knees for you like the mountain sheep.
102. Over my holy breast do appear like the sun,
103. (And) of (my) throat, you are its jewel,
104. For you, Enmerkar, son of Utu, is the praise!"
105. The lord gave heed to the word of hqly Inanna,
106. Chose from [the troops], as an emissary, one eloquent
of speech and [endowed] with endurance,
107. Made him acquire the important message of eloquent
Inanna in (its) me on her behalf.
108. "You will bring it up into the Zubi Mountain,
109. You will descend with it from the Zubi Mountain,
110. (While from) Susa to the Anshan mountain-land]
111. For her, they will humbly salute with greetings like mice,
112. (In) the great mountain ranges, the teeming multitudes
113. Will grovel in the dust for her.
114. Emissary, speak to the lord of Aratta and say to him:
115. Lest, for him, I make (the people) fly off from this
city like a wild dove from its tree,
116. Lest I make (them) fly around (in fear) like a bird over
its well founded nest,
117. Lest I requite[?] them as a current market rate (is
paid in full),
118. Lest I gather dust in it as (in) an utterly destroyed city,
119. Lest Aratta, like a settlement doomed by Enki
120. And utterly destroyed, I, too, shall utterly destroy,
121. Lest there, like the devastation [which swept destructively],

122. And in whose aftermath, Inanna arose, shrieked and
123. Yelled] aloud, I, too, shall wreak a sweeping [devastation.
124. (Therefore) when (Aratta, compliantly,) will have packed
the gold nuggets in leather sacks,
125. Will have placed the kumea-ore alongside (the gold),
126. Will have packaged (the sacks of) precious metals,
127. Will have loaded the packs on the pack animals
of the mountains,
128. Then indeed for me, for the lord whom Nudimmud has chosen
in his sacred heart,
129. May the "Junior Enlil of Sumer"
130. Have (them) build a "mountain" of a lustrous me,
131. Have them make it luxuriant for me like a boxwood tree,
132. Have them make the shining horns colorful for me as
when Utu comes forth from his chamber,
133. Have (them) make protective-signs on its doorposts
emanate brightly for me.
134. The holy song, the incantation, sung in its chambers-
135. "The Incantation of Nudimmud" - chant to him:
136. Once, there was no snake, there was no scorpion,
137. There was no hyena, there was no lion,
138. There was neither dog nor wolf,
139. There was neither fright nor goose flesh-
140. Man had no rival-
141. At that time, the mountain-lands (of) Shubar-Hamazi,
142. And the different-tongued: Sumer, the great "mountain"

of the me of magnificence,

143. Uri, "mountain" possessing all that is befitting,
144. Mountain-land (of) Mardu, resting in security,
145. The whole universe, the people who are taken care of
(by the god),
146. Addressed Enlil in one tongue.
147. At that time, there was a contending-lord, a contending-
prince, a contending-king-
148. Enki, the contending-lord, the contending-prince,
the contending-king-
149. The contending-lord, the contending-prince,
the contending-king,
150. Enki, the lord of abundance, the lord who makes
steadfast (his) utterances,
151. The lord of wisdom, clever one of the land,
152. The sage of the gods,
153. The lord of Eridu, displaying wisdom,
154. Changed the speech in their mouth, having there
placed contention,
155. When the speech amongst men had been one.
156. Moreover, the lord charged the emissary
157. Going to the mountain-land, Aratta:
158. "Emissary, by night, like the pluvius south wind - drive on!
159. By day, like the dew- be up!"
160. The emissary gave heed to the word of his king,
161. By the starry night he journeyed,

162. By day, he travelled with Utu of heaven.
163. The important message of netting[?] -Inanna he acquired
in (its) form for her,
164. He brought it up to the Zubi Mountains,
165. He descended with it from the Zubi Mountains,
166. (From) Susa to the Anshan mountain land,
167. For her, they humbly saluted with greetings like mice.
168. (In) the great mountain ranges, the teeming multitudes
169. Groveled in the dust for her.
170. Five mountains, six mountains, seven mountains
he traversed.
171. He lifted (his) eyes (as) he approached Aratta,
172. In the courtyard of Aratta he stepped joyfully,
173. He made known the dominion of his king,
174. Openly, he spoke the words in his heart.
175. The emissary related (the message) to the lord of Aratta:
176. "Your father, my king, has sent me to you,
177. The lord of Uruk, the lord of Kulaba, has sent me to you."
178. "What is it to me what your king has said;
what is it to me what he has added ?!"
179. "My king, this is what he has said,
this is what he has added-
180. My king who is fit for lordship from his birth,
181. The lord of Uruk, the sagkal-dragon living in Sumer,
who pulverizes mountains like flour,

182. The stag of the tall mountains endowed with lordly antlers,
183. (Beautiful as) the mother-goat (after) being cleansed
with soap and plucked,
184. Whom the "unfailing cow" had given birth to in the
very highland-
185. Enmerkar, the son of Utu, has sent me to you,
186. My king, this is what he said:
187. 'Lest I make his city roam about like a wild dove around
its tree,
188. Lest I frighten (them away) like a bird from its
well founded nest,
189. Lest I requite⁷ them as a current market rate
(is paid in full),
190. Lest I [gather] dust in it as (in) an utterly destroyed city,
191. Lest Aratta, like a settlement doomed by Enki
192. And utterly destroyed, I, too, shall utterly destroy,
193. Lest there, like the devastation which swept destructively,
194. And in whose aftermath, Inanna arose, shrieked and
195. Yelled aloud, I, too, shall wreak a sweeping devastation.
196. (Therefore) when (Aratta, compliantly,) will have packed
the gold nuggets in leather sacks,
197. Will have placed the kumea-ore alongside (the gold),
198. Will have packaged (the sacks of) precious metals,
199. Will have loaded the packs on the pack animals of the
mountains,
200. Then indeed for me, for the lord whom Nudimmud has

chosen in his sacred heart,

201. May the "Junior Enlil of Sumer"
202. Have (them) build a "mountain" of a lustrous me,
203. Have them make it luxuriant for me like a boxwood tree,
204. Have them make the shining horns colorful for me
as when Utu comes forth from his chamber,
205. Have (them) make protective-signs on its doorposts
emanate brightly for me.
206. The holy song, the incantation, sung in its chambers-
207. "The Incantation of Nudimmud" - chant[to him]for me. '
208. After you will say whatever you may say to me-
209. For the scion of the [one w]ith the glistening beard,
210. For him, whom his "providing cow"[had given birth to]
in the "mountain" of the lustrous me,
211. For him, who has been reared on the soil of Aratta,
212. For him, who has been given suck at the breast of the
"unfailing cow",
213. For him, who is suited for office in Kulaba, the "mountain"
of great me's,
214. For Enmerkar, the son of Utu,
215. Let me announce that message in the Shrine Eanna as
glad tidings,
216. (And) in his Gipar, bearing exuberance like a fruitful
celtis-tree,
217. To my king, the lord of Kulaba, let me repeat it. "
218. Although he had thus spoken to him, (The lord of Aratta
replied):

219. "Emissary, speak to your king, the lord of Kulaba,
and say to him:
220. 'It is I, the lord fit for (the rite of) purification,
221. Whom the "huge stock of heaven", the queen of heaven
and earth,
222. Innin of the luxuriant me, holy Inanna,
223. Has brought to Aratta, the "mountain" of the lustrous me,
224. (And) for whom she has shut the approach of the mountain
like a huge door;
225. Will then Aratta submit to Uruk?!
226. Aratta's submission to Uruk is out of the question!
Say (this) to him!"
227. Although he had thus spoken to him,
228. The emissary replied to the lord of Aratta:
229. "The great queen of heaven, who is lofty upon an awesome
me,
230. Dwelling on the peak of the bright mountain,
231. Adorning the dais of the bright mountain,
232. My lord and king, as her Subarian servant,
233. Had them introduce her as the "Divine Queen of Eanna".
234. (Therefore,) O lord, Aratta shall bow in absolute submission!
235. Thus, in the Brickwork of Kulaba, she made me speak
for her."
236. Thereupon, the lord became depressed and deeply troubled.
237. He had no answer, he searched and searched for an answer.
238. As he was glaring with down cast eyes at his own feet,

he began to find an answer;

239. Having found an answer, he emitted a cry,
240. To the emissary, the answer to the message
241. He bellowed like a bull:
242. "Emissary! Speak to your king, the lord of Kulaba,
and say to him:
243. 'The great mountain-range (Aratta) is a celtis tree grown
high to the sky,
244. As to its side, it is a net, as to its branches, a snare.
245. (It) is a crow whose talons are that of the anzu-bird or that
of the eagle;
246. (This) barrier of Inanna is perfectly made - impenetrable,
247. Those eagle-talons make the blood of the enemy run
from the bright mountain.
248. Although, in Aratta there is weep[ing] and lamentations
are sung,
249. Water libations are offered and flour is sprinkled,
250. On the "mountain", sacrifices and prayers are offered
in obeisance,
251. (Nevertheless,) how with less than five or ten men,
252. Can mobilized Uruk proceed to the Zubi Mountain?!
253. Your king is heading in all haste for my mace,
254. (But) I am eager for a contest.
255. He, who acknowledges not a contest, (like) the bull
256. Which acknowledges not the bull at its side, licks not
clean (the grass) all about,
257. He, who acknowledges a[cont]est, (like) the[bull]

258. Which acknowledges the bull at its side, licks clean
(the grass) all about.
259. Does [he] reject me in (this) contest?
260. Like] which none can match,
261. Does he, too, reject me in (this) contest?
262. I say [further] to you, emissary;
263. The resounding[?] words (which) I make overbearing,
may you keep them all in mind;
264. In Eanna - a lion lying on its paws -
265. From whose midst a bull bellows -
266. (And) in his Gipar bearing exuberance like a fruitful
celtis tree,
267. Repeat (them) to your king, the lord of Kulaba:
268. The mountain-range (Aratta) is a warrior, leaping high,
269. Like (Utu) going to his abode at twilight.
270. Like him, from whose face (rays of) blood extend,
271. Like Nanna, who is majestic in the high heavens,
272. Like him, whose countenance shines with radiance;
273. Whose impenetrability is like the woods in the mountains.
274. Should (Inanna) who is the "mush-crown" of Aratta,
275. As the benevolent, protective Spirit of the "mountain"
of the lustrous me,
276. Keep Aratta, like a 'shining disk' of heaven, in proper
order for herself,
277. Then will I make known my preeminence.
278. (As to the contest,) he may not pour barley into sacks,
nor have it carted,

279. He may not have that barley carried into the settlements,
280. He may not place collectors over the crown-serfs.
281. (But) if he can have barley poured into net-sacks,
282. And can have (it) loaded on the pack donkeys,
283. At whose sides reserve donkeys have been placed,
284. And can have (it) heaped up in a mound in the
courtyard of Aratta.
285. Were he to heap (it) up (in such a manner);
were Inanna, the luxuriance of the grain-mound,
286. Who is the "illuminator of the lands", the "ornament
of the settlements",
287. Who adorns the seven walls,
288. Who is the heroic lady, fit for battle,
289. Who, as the heroine of the battleground,
makes the troops dance the Dance of Inanna,
290. To cast off Aratta (as if to) a carrion-pursuing dog,
291. Then would I bow to him,
292. He having made me know his preeminence,
293. Like the city, my citizenry, I, as well, would submit
to him. (So) say to him."
294. After he had thus spoken to him,
295. The emissary - the lord of Aratta
296. Having put the message in his mouth as (though from)
his (own) mouth-
297. Like a wild cow, turned on his thigh,
298. Like a sand fly he came in the coolness of the morning watch.

299. In the Brickwork of Kulaba he stepped joyfully,
300. The emissary rushed to the main court, the court of
the throne room.
301. To his king, the lord of Kulaba,
302. He repeated (it) as (though from) his (lord of Aratta's)
mouth.
303. Like a bull he bellowed at him,
304. And he (the king) pricked up (his) ear at him like
an alert bull.
305. The king seated him comfortably at his right side,
306. (Thus) making him recline on his left side,
307. And uttered, "Can it be that Aratta is aware of the
given plan?"
308. Day broke: after Utu rose,
309. He, as "The Sun-God of the Land", raised his head.
310. The king took hold of the Tigris (-vessel) and Euphrates
(-vessel),
311. Into the Euphrates (-vessel) he added (water) from the
Tigris (-vessel),
312. Large jars were (then) placed towards heaven,
313. Small jars he crowded alongside of them, like lambs
lying(on)the grass,
314. The jars facing An were placed adjacently,
315. The king- since the eshda-vessels were of gold-
316. He, Enmerkar, the son of Utu, set them wide apart.
317. Thereupon, the "tablet-surface of the convocation",

the "pointed stylus of the assembly, "

318. The golden statue fashioned on a propitious day,
319. Beautiful Nanibgal, grown (with) a fair luxuriance,
320. Nisaba, the lady of broad wisdom,
321. Opened for him her "House of Wisdom",
322. Having entered the "palace of heaven", he became attentive.
323. The lord then opened his main storehouse,
324. He firmly set his large lidga-measure on the ground,
325. The king removed his old barley from the (new) barley,
326. The greenmalt; (spread) everywhere, he soaked with
water,
327. Its beard being (?) like spikenard, sank(?)
328. He narrowed the meshes of the net-sacks,
329. The barley for the granary he measured out in full,
adding (even) for the locust-tooth,
330. After having loaded the pack donkeys -
331. The reserve donkeys, having placed them at their sides -
332. The king, the lord of broad wisdom,
333. The lord of Uruk, the lord of Kulaba,
334. Dispatched (them) directly to Aratta.
335. The people, like ants out of the crevices,
336. In their entirety were moving on to Aratta,
337. The lord, furthermore, was charging the emissary
338. Going to the mountain-land Aratta:
339. "Emissary, speak to the lord of Aratta and say to him:
340. The base of my scepter is the me of magnificence,

341. Its crown is providing a protective shade over Kulaba,
342. Under its florescent branches - being the Shrine
Eanna -
343. Holy Inanna refreshes herself.
344. He lopped off (this) sprig and had it in evidence,
345. He held it in his hand like beads of red-stone and
lapis-lazuli.
346. Let the lord of Aratta bring it before me. Say (this)
to him. "
347. After he had thus spoken to him,
348. The emissary journeying to Aratta,
349. Covered his feet with the dust of the road,
350. Stirred up the pebbles of the mountains,
351. Like a huge serpent prowling about in the plain, he was
unopposed.
352. After the emissary reached Aratta,
353. The people of Aratta,
354. Stepped up to admire the pack donkeys.
355. The emissary in the courtyard of Aratta,
356. Measured out in full the barley for the granary, adding
(even) for the locust-tooth.
357. As if (from) the rains of heaven (and) shining sun,
358. Aratta was filled with abundance.
359. Like when the gods reclined together on their couches,
360. Aratta sated its hunger.
361. The people of Aratta,

362. Covered their fields with the water-soaked greenmalt.
363. Shepherds, knights, and shatam-officers,
364. [.....] in their place run out of water [.....]
365. [.....]
366. [.....]
367. The citi[zens] of Aratta became atte[n]tive,
368. To Aratta, he reve[aled] the matter.
369. Obediently, in[?] Aratta, from the hand[.....]
370. "To the lord of Uruk, his hand[.....]
371. We, in the direst of hunger,
372. In[our dire]st of famine, let us prostrate ourselves before him!"
373. The eloquent elders
374. Wrung (their) hands in despair, pressed (their) shoulders against the wall;
375. Verily, were there placing their treasure houses[?] at the disposal of the lord.
376. His scepter was guiding[.....] in the midst of the pala[ce],"
377. "He spoke, revealing the words in his heart:
378. Your father, my king , has sent me to you,
379. Enmerkar , the son of Utu, has sent me to you."
380. "What is it to me what your king has said; [what is it to me] what he has added?!"
381. "My king, this is what he has said, this is what [he has added] -

382. 'The base of my scepter is the me of magnificence,
 383. Its crown is providing a [protective shade] over Kulaba,
 384. Under its florescent branches - being the Shrine Eanna -
 385. Holy Inanna refreshes herself.
 386. He lopped off (this) sprig and had it in evidence,
 387. He held it in his hand like beads of red-stone and lapis-lazuli.
 388. Let the lord of Aratta bring it before me!' To me he (thus)
 said."
 389. After having thus spoken to him,
 390. On this account, he went inside the underground (chamber)
 and lay himself down in a fast.
 391. Day broke, he discussed the matter at length,
 392. He spoke unspeakable words,
 393. He circulated with (this) message as if it were barley
 eaten by a donkey:
 394. "Now, what did one say to the other?
 395. What further did one add to the other?
 396. What one says to the other, thus verily let it be!"
 (Disregarding the public opinion, the lord of Aratta turned
 to the emissary:)
 397. Emissary, speak to your king, the lord of Kulaba, and say
 to him:
 398. "A scepter (that) is not (of) wood, nor designated as wood,
 399. He (the lord of Aratta), having placed it in his lustfous
 plāce, is attracted to it;
 400. It is not (of) adaru-wood, nor (of) kanaktu-wood,

401. It is not (of) cedar wood, nor (of) cypress wood,
402. It is not (of) hashur-cypress, nor (of) boxwood,
403. It is not (of) ushu-wood, nor (of) pine[?],
404. It is not (of) poplar - the wood for chariots,
405. It is not (of) tuhallu-wood - the wood for whips,
406. It is not (of) gold, nor (of) copper,
407. It is not (of) genuine kumea-metal nor (of) silver,
408. It is not (of) red-stone, nor (of) lapis lazuli,
409. He lopped off (this) scepter and had it in evidence,
410. He held it in his hand like beads of red-stone and lapis lazuli.
411. Let the lord of Kulaba bring it before me!
Say (this) to him."
412. After he had thus spoken to him,
413. The emissary went roaringly like a young donkey cut off
(from) the chariot tongue;
414. Like a wild donkey fleeing through arid terrain,
(his) feet touched (the ground),
415. He filled his mouth with wind;
416. He ran in one track like the long-wooled sheep butting
sheep in its fury.
417. In the Brickwork of Kulaba he stepped joyfully.
418. To his king, the lord of Kulaba,
419. He gave over the words (of the message).
420. Enki (then) gave Enmerkar wisdom,
421. The lord gave instructions to his chief steward,
422. In his[?] house[.....]

423. The king removed the hair? [.]
424. As if he were overspreading, he [.] , and covered?
the top.
425. Like herbs, he [bray]ed the surface with a pestle,
426. As if into his mouth, he poured the heated hide into a reed,
427. From the sunlight it emerged into the shade,
428. And from the shade it emerged into the sunlight.
429. After five to ten periods had elapsed,
430. He split the reed (containing) the heated hide as if
(with) an axe,
431. The lord looked upon it joyfully,
432. Fine oil, (and) fragrant oil of the bright mountain, he
poured upon the plastic mass.
433. The lord, for the emissary journeying to the mountain land,
434. Placed the scepter in his hand.
435. The emissary, whose journeying to Aratta
436. Was like an u-bird over the mountain range, like a fly [ov]er
the ground,
437. And whose passing through the mountains was like subur-
spawn (in) the pools, [reac]hed Aratta.
438. In the courtyard of Aratta he stepped joyfully,
439. Walked with his scepter (that was) covered (with) an oil-film,
440. He rendered homage and performed the water-rite.
441. The lord of Aratta, aware of the scepter -
442. Which was exciting awe at the entrance (of) the cella, his
holy dwelling -

443. He, the lord, called to his shatam-officer:
444. "Is Aratta like a ewe [struck down, are its roads like
(that of) a [place] of hostility?
445. Since holy Inanna has given
446. The primacy of Aratta to the lord of Kulaba -
447. Her man who had sent the emissary
448. To make the severe message to appear as manifestly as
Utu rising -
449. She, holy Inanna, is now examining you.
450. In Aratta whereto may they go in the phantasy?
451. Until when will the yoke be made pleasing?"
452. Will we, in the direst of hunger,
453. In our direst famine, prostrate ourselves before the lord
of Kulaba?"
454. The lord of Aratta, to the emissary,
455. Entrusted the message as if (it were) a solemn ban.
456. "Emissary! Speak to your king, the lord of Kulaba, and
say to him:
457. 'An ur that is not black, an ur that is not white,
458. An ur that is not brown, an ur that is not dark red,
459. An ur that is not yellow, an ur that is not speckled,'
let him give you (such) an ur.
460. My ur will contest his ur,
461. Let the capable (one) prevail! Say (this) to him."
462. After he had thus spoken to him,
463. The emissary went (with one) "thigh (after the other)
thigh".

464. In the Brickwork of Kulaba, like a menial, he was speechless.
465. Like a goat he gazed upon the wide-mouthed beast of the
"mountain",
466. He crept secretly (before) the temple of the me(as if it
were) a huge mir-snake coming out of a field.
467. In[.] he raised (his) head,
468. [.] of Aratta.
469. From his seat, [like an onrushing] torrent, [he] addressed
[him]:
470. "Emissary! Speak to the lord of Aratta and say to him:
471. 'A garment that is not black, a garment that is not white,
472. A garment that is not brown, a garment that is not dark red,
473. A garment that is not yellow, a garment that is not
speckled, let him give you (such) a garment;
474. My ur is "The Grappler with Enlil". I will send him an ur.
475. My ur shall contest his ur.
476. Let the capable (one) become known!' Say (this) to him.
477. In addition, speak to him and say:
478. 'As long as there is peace, let them come willingly,
479. In his city, like sheep, let them go before him,
480. He, like their shepherd, let him follow behind them,
481. When he comes, let the "mountain of bright lapis lazuli",
482. Like a crushed reed, humble itself before him.
483. And its bright gold and silver,
484. For the lady of Eanna, Inanna,
485. Let them heap up in the courtyard of Aratta.'

486. Furthermore, speak to him and say:
487. 'Lest I keep (the people of) his city cut off [?] (from it)
like a wild dove from its tree,
488. Lest I smash (them) like[....] ,
489. Lest I requite [?] (them)[as a current market rate (is paid
in full)] ,
490. Lest I make them walk into the (open) wind[.....] .
491. (Therefore), when he comes, after they will have taken the
mountain stones,
492. Let them build for me the Urugal-Eridu and Abzu-Enun,
493. Its architrave, being of a dauby clay cover, let them
adorn[for me] ,
494. Its protection let them spread[over] the land for me."
495. His speaking[....] although being excessive[?], (added):
496. "Recite his omen[to him]:
497. 'At that time, the lord[?][.....],
498. [....] on the throne daises and on the ornate chairs,
the noble seed,
499. [....] alone, follow.
500. His speech was (now) [great] , its contents expanded,
501. The emissary, his mouth (being) heavy, was not able to
repeat (it).
502. Because the emissary, his mouth (being) heavy, was not
able to repeat (it),
503. The lord of Kulaba patted clay and wrote the message like
(on a present-day) tablet -

504. Formerly, the writing of messages on clay was not established -
505. Now, with Utu's bringing forth the day, verily, this was so,
506. The lord of Kulaba inscribed the message like (on a present-day) tablet , this, verily, was so.
507. The emissary, like a bird, "flapped his wings",
508. Like a wolf fast by a kid, he raged forth.
509. Five mountains, six mountains, seven mountains he traversed.
510. He lifted (his) eyes (as) he arrived in Aratta,
511. In the courtyard of Aratta he stepped joyfully,
512. He made known the dominion of his king,
513. Openly, he spoke the words in his heart,
514. The emissary related (the message) to the lord of Aratta:
515. "Your father, [my] king, has sent me to you,
516. The lord of Uruk, the lord of Kulaba, has sent me [to you]."
517. "What is it to me what your king [has said] ; what is it to me what he has added?!"
518. "My king, this is what he has said, this is [what he has] added -
519. My king is like a huge [celtis tree] , O son of Enlil,
520. This tree [.....] has grown high, [(uniting) heaven and earth] ,
521. [Its crown] reaches [heaven],
522. Its trunk is set upon the earth -

523. He, who is made to shine forth in lordship and kingship,
524. Enmerkar, the son of Utu, has given me a clay tablet.
525. O lord of Aratta, after you will have examined the clay
tablet, after you will have learned the heart of the message,
526. And after you will have said whatever you may say to me -
527. For the scion of the one with the glistening beard,
528. For him, whom the "providing cow" had given birth to in
the mountain of pure me's,
529. For him, who has been reared on the soil of Uruk,
530. For him, who has been given suck at the breast of the
"unfailing cow",
531. For him, who is fit for lordship in Kulaba, the 'mountain' of
great me's,
532. For Enmerkar, the son of Utu,
533. Let me announce that message in the Shrine Eanna as glad
tidings,
534. (And) in his Gipar, bearing exuberance like a fruitful
celtis tree,
535. To my king, the lord of Kulaba, let me repeat it."
536. After he had thus spoken to him,
537. The lord of Aratta, for the emissary,
538. Took his brazier.
539. The lord of Aratta looked upon the tablet.
540. The related message being incisive, (his) face expressing
anger,
541. The lord of Aratta glared at the brazier.

542. It was then, that for the lord worthy of the crown of
lordship, being the son of Enlil,
543. That Ishkur, thundering in heaven and earth,
544. He, the "onrushing storm", verily, stood upon the great
weather-demon, the place [.....] ,
545. He was agitating the mountains [.....] ,
546. He was convulsing the mountain range [.....] ,
547. The awesome[?] radiance[?] [.....] of his breast, its sheen,
548. Caused the mountain range to raise its voice in joy.
549. Aratta's planting seed (was) in the womb of the mountain,
550. The wheat, reproduced itself, the legume, as well
reproduced itself,
551. The wheat which reproduced itself, into the granary of [.....] ,
552. Was brought for the lord of Aratta,
553. And in the courtyard of Aratta, was heaped up[?] before him.
554. The lord of Aratta regarded the wheat,
555. As for the emissary, his twitching eyes looked up to him
with scrutiny.
556. The lord of Aratta called to the emissary:
557. "Its primacy, Inanna, the lady of all the lands,
558. Did not cut off from her city, Aratta, nor did she snatch
(it) away to Uruk;
559. Did not cut off from her (Temple) Ezaginna, nor did she
snatch (it) away to the Shrine Eanna;
560. Did not cut off from the "mountain" of the lustrous me,
nor did she snatch (it) away to the Brickwork of Kulaba;

561. Did not cut off from the "adorned bed", nor did she
snatch (it) away to the "shining bed";
562. Did not cut off from (them their primacy) for the lord,
(the one) of the (rite of) purification, nor did she
snatch (it) away for the lord of Uruk, the lord of Kulaba.
563. Aratta, on its right and left,
564. Inanna, the lady of all the lands,
565. Surrounded for her like an onrushing torrent.
566. They are people (whom she) separates from other people,
567. They are people whom Dumuzi elects from other people,
568. Who are firmly establishing the word of Inanna.
569. Let them - the clever warrior and the servant of Dumuzi -
whirl about (in the contest) !
570. [Come quickly, [my trembling son] !
571. They, who stood in the midst of the flood,
572. After the flood swept thereover,
573. Inanna, the lady of all the lands,
574. In (her) great love of Dumuzi,
575. Sprinkled upon them the "water of life",
576. And put the yoke on the neck of the land (of Sumer). "
577. The clever ur, when he came,
578. Had covered his head (with) a colorful turban,
579. And wrapped (himself) in a garment of lion skins.
580. [.....] raised, [.....] holding ? ,
581. [.....] spoke ? ,
582. [.....] lady [.....] ,

583. His[.....],
584. Inanna[.....],
585. Her song was pleasing to her spouse, Amaushumgalanna.
586. Since that time, in the holy ear, [the holy jar of Dumuzi,
587. She made (the song) perfect, sang (it) and let the word
be known.
588. The old woman when she came to the "mountain" of the
lustrous me,
589. Like a maiden, who in her day is perfect, went up to him,
590. Painted her eyes with kohl,
591. Arrayed herself in a white garment,
592. Came forth with the true [tiara] like the moonlight,
593. She prepared the [singer in the "house of the choicest lyre".
594. Enmerkar, her [spouse], she made occupy the throne-dais
with her.
595. Having raised up[.....],
596. [Indeed] for Aratta, the ewes and their lambs are grazing
together,
597. [Indeed] for Aratta, the mother-goats and their kids,
are grazing together,
598. [Indeed] for Aratta, the cows and their calves are grazing
together,
599. [Indeed] for Aratta, the donkey mares and their black,
swift-footed foals are grazing together,
600. In Aratta, (they) say together:
601. "Let them heap up in mounds, let them stock in piles,

602. The abundance is truly your abundance,
603. After having made it for the lord of Aratta..... ,
604. Let him.... ,
605. He will.... ,
606. He came forth..... ,
607. He set aright for her..... ,
608. [.....] ,
609. [.....] ,
610. [.....] ,
611. [.....] befitting [.....] ,
612. [.....] in the (joyful) ilu -song of the heart,
613. [.....] your abundance in his [.....] ,
614. [.....] Enlil has granted you, (and) let my vigor[?] be
made known,
615. [Enme]rkar, his father, was not luxuriantly fertile,
no water was brought forth,
616. Enlil, the father of all the lands, did make the (water)
sparkle, and he apportioned (it).
617. In accordance with the task which has now been established,
618. The people of Aratta -
619. Their task being to ply with gold and bright lapis [lazuli] -
620. Should "the men (of) the holy fruit" who grow fruit trees,
621. With their figs and grapes, like the dew of nectar, heap
up in great mounds -
622. Will dig out the genuine lapis lazuli from its root,
623. Will remove the adattu-reeds from its crown,

624. (Then), for Inanna, the lady of Eanna,
625. Will heap up (all of that) in the courtyard of Eanna,
626. Come, my king, (for) counsel I would offer you, let my
counsel be taken,
627. A word I would speak to you, let it be heard!
628. After the people of the settlements will have selected the
"one of the fragrant oils",
629. Let the man of Aratta,
630. Who will bring gifts to our temple, say:
631. "As for me, when I was about to go from here,
632. The ever-sparkling lady gave me my wine?".
633. Geshtinanna [.....] ,
634. In that city [.....] ,
635. Festivals were not [established] ,
636. Daily, [.....] ,

them is the Anzu bird and its young.²²

B. The Closing Sections

Regrettably, the endings of only two of the epics are complete, namely, that of Enmerkar and Ensubkeshdanna and Lugalbanda and Enmerkar. Of the remaining two, the extant text of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta offers only a glimpse of the ending. Since Lugalbanda-Hurum was an epic of over 500 lines²³ and the reconstructed text contains only 490 lines of which the last lines are fragmentary, it is difficult to speculate about its ending.

²² My interpretation of the introduction differs from that of C. Wilcke, *op. cit.* p. 9f. Furthermore, in his structural analysis, he states that Lugalbanda's wish to be reunited with his brethren is the motif of the epic. If this were the case, when it does occur in the very middle of the epic, ll. 220ff, the epic should have ended right then and there.

M. Civil, in his review of C. Wilcke's work, JNES 31 (1972), p. 386 offers the following translation of Lugalbanda-Enmerkar 1-2: "Lugalbanda was idle in a far-away country, arrogance was prodding him in the sands of Sabum". The translations "country" and "sands of Sabum" rather than the rendition, "mountain" or "mountain-country" which is supported by lexical, bilingual texts and geographic evidence (see C. Wilcke, *op. cit.* p. 132 and below p. 50) is rather surprising. *iši-sabu^{ki}* like *kur-sabu^{ki}* is an appositional construction, for the translation "sands of Sabu" should we not expect a genitival construction? Furthermore, would a predatory bird like the Anzu nest in the "sands of Sabu" or upon "Mount Sabu"?

Besides the minor problem of changing subjects from line one to line two, his choice of the nuance "arrogance" instead of the contextually justified "trust" - as was shown above - is difficult to accept. In addition *nir-gál* besides "trust" seems to approach the word "serenity" rather than "arrogance", see, for example, Lugale 1 *lugal u₄ me-lám-bi nir-gál* "O, king (Ninurta), day (light), whose awesome-radiance is serene".

²³ See C. Wilcke, Lugalbandaepos, p. 6, n. 18.

In Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna, the lord of Aratta,
 Ensuhkeshdanna, after losing the challenge which he sent to
 Enmerkar of Erech wherein the loser would acknowledge the other
 as his suzerain, makes his concession:

"You are the beloved lord of Inanna, you alone are exalted,

Inanna has chosen you truly for her holy lap -

you are her beloved,

From the setting (of the sun) to the face of the east

you are their great lord and I am (only) second (to) you

From (the moment) of conception, I was not your equal,

you are the "big brother",

I cannot compare with you ever."

Enmerkar was challenged by Ensuhkeshdanna,

In it Enmerkar was superior to Ensuhkeshdanna.

Nisaba, be praised!

Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna 277-284²⁴

²⁴Lines 277-284 from A. Berlin's manuscript:

277. za-e-me-en en-ki-ág-^dinanna-me-en
 dili-zu-dè-mah-me-en
^dinanna-ke₄ úr-kù-ga-ni-éš zi-dè-eš
 mu-un-pàd-dè-en ki-ág-gá-ni-me-en
 sig-ta igi-nim-šè en-gal-bi za-e-me-en
 gá-e ús-sa-zu-me-en
280. a-ri-a-ta gaba-ri-zu nu-me-en šeš-gal za-e-me-en
 gá-e nu-mu-da-sá-e-en u₄-da-ré-éš
 en-me-er-kár-ra en-suḥ-kešd-an-na a-da-man du₁₁-ga
 en-me-er-kár en-suḥ-kešd-an-na diri-ga-a-ba
284. ^dnisaba zà-mí.

The closing section of Lugalbanda-Enmerkar²⁵ containing the reply of Inanna to distressed Enmerkar, couched in allegories and intimations, is considered to be enigmatic and obscure²⁶. However, following the same method of analysis which was utilized in the opening section of this epic, I would propose the following interpretation:

Enmerkar, fearfully worried because of his apparently unsuccessful siege of Aratta, and since threatening Amorites were on the move in Sumer and Akkad, sends Lugalbanda to the Brickwork of Kulaba²⁷ in Uruk with a plea for Inanna's aid. Inanna receives Lugalbanda favorably in her boudoir,²⁸ and eyes him as if he were her consort divine Amaushumgalanna²⁹, thereby intimating his succession to Enmerkar in the fertility-rite.

Afterwards, using allegorical terms, Inanna at first,

²⁵ See C. Wilcke, op. cit. p. 122 ll. 345ff.

²⁶ See, S. N. Kramer, Review Article of C. Wilcke, Das Lugalbandaepos, ActaOr. 33 (1971) p. 378.

²⁷ I follow C. Wilcke's view of Lugalbanda's destination against that of S. N. Kramer, see op. cit. p. 378, n. 44. In addition, Enmerkar makes Lugalbanda take a vow that upon his arrival he will not surrender the great structures of Kulaba, see Lugalbanda-Hurum 289. zi-an-na zi-ki-a l-pà me-gal-gal-kul-aba^{ki}-a šu-zu ba-ra-ba-ra-è "your hand shall not give up the great structures of Kulaba". It is inconceivable that he would take this oath if he were going to Aratta.

²⁸ See, at first C. Wilcke, Lugalbanda p. 122, l. 348 with commentary. For dagan, "private quarters, harem", see Th. Jacobsen, Tammuz, p. 380 n. 49. For the grammatical problem confronted by Wilcke, see already A. Poebel, GSG p. 141, §386 Wilcke's suggestion taking šà-da-ga-na from šà-tag "cushion" is bewildering.

²⁹ For this name, see ELA 66 with commentary.

describes Enmerkar's presence in Aratta as the carp-he-goat³⁰-fish in the pure river³¹ which is the lapis-blue water skin of Inanna, and as a toad³² which eats the soapwort of the mountain. (The river seems to represent the lapis-lazuli(trade)route to Aratta). This divine carp-he-goat-fish (symbol of Enki) is the protective-emblem which brings joy in the midst of the campaign. Its long, scaly tail reaches the canebrake of mature reeds³³ (Enki's abode).

Inanna, thereupon, prescribes for Enmerkar to cut down a lone-standing tamarisk tree (symbol of An³⁴) growing near that canebrake, fashion it into a bowl, place in it the carp-he-goat-fish with uprooted mature reeds of the holy place, cook and garnish it, and offer it to the A-ankarra-weapon of Inanna. Then will Enmerkar succeed in capturing Aratta and take its spoils.

³⁰ For the suhur-máš^{ku6} (carp-he-goat-fish) as the symbol of Enki/Ea, see A. Salonen, Fischeri p. 225, 250. Compare 6NT 636 (unpublished) obv. 5 en-ki A.GUD^{ku6} un-nir-e àm-si "Enki, the carp who occupies the unir-temple. (un-nir for u₆-nir was suggested to me by Prof. W. G. Lambert).

³¹ Is there any relationship between this river and the Uqnû (Lapis Lazuli) river from Assyrian times?

³² I cannot identify this symbol with certainty. However, my guess is that it represents Lugalbanda since he is the only one who ate the soapwort of the mountain. See Lugalbanda-Enmerkar 243 Lugalbanda-Hurru 303 and 315.

³³ For the canebrake as the abode of Enki, see Lugalbanda-Enmerkar 299-301 = 365-367; Th. Jacobsen, JNES 2 (1943) p. 118.

³⁴ See PBS 10/4, 12 obv. I, 4 giš šinig = d a-nim; PBS 1/2, 123, ll. 2-5 giš šinig-giš-gi giš-ana ki-sikil-le mú-a. "tamarisk tree of the canebrake, An's tree growing in a lustrous place".

The implication of the allegory is that Enmerkar must make his tutelary gods, An and Enki, subservient to Inanna - and only then, having received Inanna's aid, will he succeed.

Although the closing section of Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta³⁵ is not complete, it is apparent that Enmerkar supported by Inanna,³⁶ Enki³⁷ and Nisaba³⁸, loses this contest-of-wits to the lord of Aratta, who as the son of Enlil is aided by his tutelary god. Nevertheless, it seems that after the consort of Enmerkar who served as Inanna has been replaced, a reconciliation was made between Aratta and Uruk-Kulaba. The people of Aratta sent semi-precious stones and building materials together with the people of Uruk-Kulaba who offered figs and grapes - symbols of fertility - to Inanna in the courtyard of Eanna.

³⁵ See ELA 11. 617ff.

³⁶ See ELA 11. 65ff.

³⁷ Cf. ELA 11. 135ff; 11. 420ff.

³⁸ Cf. ELA 11. 317ff.

THE SUMERIANS

THEIR HISTORY,
CULTURE,
AND CHARACTER

Samuel Noah Kramer



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THE LEGACY OF SUMER

On the assumption that civilization is of some value for man, the long-dead Sumerians might well point with “fingerless” pride to the numerous innovations, inventions, and institutions which they helped to originate. To be sure, it might be said that these would have come to be in any case, Sumerians or no Sumerians. But this hardly seems to the point—the Sumerians were there first, and it seems not unfair to give credit where credit is due. Be that as it may, in this chapter I shall attempt to sketch rather briefly and hesitatingly some of their more palpable and significant contributions to the culture of man. However, before turning to the legacy of Sumer to later generations, let us take a look at the give-and-take between the Sumerians and their neighbors near and far in the days when they were alive and making history instead of being made into history. And let us start with Aratta, a far-off city-state probably situated in northwestern Iran near the Caspian Sea, which owes its fame and name not to its own achievements, though these seem to have been quite a few, but to the bards and poets of Sumer who, for some as yet undiscovered reason, sang of its metals and stones, its craftsmen and artisans, its boldly challenging *en*, its boastfully confident *mashmash*, and its beloved goddess, who seems to be none other than Inanna of Sumer.

In 1952 I published a Sumerian poem entitled “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta: A Sumerian Epic Tale of Iraq and Iran”; it consists of over six hundred fairly well-preserved lines of text pieced together from twenty tablets and fragments now located in the Istanbul Museum of the Ancient Orient and in the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia.

The two main protagonists of this epic tale are Enmerkar, a priestly lord—or *en*, to use the Sumerian word—of Erech, an ancient Sumerian city which the Germans have been excavating on and off for the past thirty years, and an unnamed *en* of Aratta, an important but still unidentified city-state in ancient Iran. Briefly sketched, the content of this Sumerian epic tale runs as follows.

Once upon a time, Enmerkar, son of the sun-god, Utu, having determined to make a vassal state of Aratta, implores his sister, Inanna, the powerful Sumerian goddess of love and war, to see to it that the people of Aratta bring gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and precious stones and build for him various shrines and temples, particularly the Abzu, the sea temple of Enki, in Eridu.

Inanna, heeding Enmerkar's plea, advises him to seek out a suitable herald to cross the imposing mountains of Anshan and assures him that the people of Aratta will submit to him and carry out the building operations he desires. Enmerkar selects his herald and sends him to the *en* of Aratta with a message containing a threat to destroy and make desolate his city unless he and his people bring down silver and gold and build and decorate Enki's temple. To further impress him, Enmerkar instructs his herald to repeat to him the "spell of Enki," which relates how the god Enki had put an end to man's "golden age" under Enlil's universal sway over the earth and its inhabitants.

The herald, after traversing seven mountains, arrives at Aratta, duly repeats his master's words to its *en*, and asks for his answer. The latter, however, refuses to yield to Enmerkar, claiming that he is Inanna's protégé and that she had brought him to Aratta as its ruler. Thereupon, the herald informs him that Enmerkar had brought Inanna to Erech and had made her queen of its temple, Eanna, and that the goddess had promised Enmerkar that Aratta would submit to him.

The *en* of Aratta is stunned by this news. He composes an answer for the herald to take back to his king in which he admonishes Enmerkar for resorting to arms and says that he prefers a "contest," that is, a fight between two selected champions. He goes on to say that, since Inanna has become his enemy, he is ready to submit to Enmerkar only if he will send him large quantities of grain. The herald returns to Erech posthaste and delivers the message to Enmerkar in the courtyard of the assembly hall.

Before making his next move, Enmerkar performs several acts apparently ritualistic in character. First, he takes counsel with Nidaba, the Sumerian goddess of wisdom. Then he has his beasts of burden loaded with grain. They are led to Aratta by the herald, who is to deliver to its lord a message eulogizing Enmerkar's scepter and commanding the lord to bring Enmerkar carnelian and lapis lazuli. On arrival, the herald piles up the grain in the courtyard and delivers his message. The people, delighted with the grain, are ready to present Enmerkar with the desired carnelian (nothing seems to be said of the lapis lazuli) and to have the "elders" build his "pure house" for him. But the hysterical *en* of Aratta, after eulogizing his own scepter, refuses and insists, in words identical with those of Enmerkar, that the latter bring *him* carnelian and lapis lazuli.

On the herald's return to Erech, Enmerkar seemingly consults the omens, in particular one involving a *sushima*-reed, which he brings forth from "light to shade" and from "shade to light," until he finally cuts it down "after five years, after ten years had passed." He sends the herald forth once again to Aratta, this time merely placing the scepter in his hand without any accompanying message. The sight of the scepter seems to arouse terror in the *en* of Aratta. He turns to his *shatam* and, after speaking bitterly of the plight of his city as a result of Inanna's displeasure, seems ready to yield to Enmerkar. Nevertheless, he once again issues a challenge to Enmerkar. This time he demands that Enmerkar select, as his representative, one of his "fighting men" to engage in single combat with one of his own "fighting men." Thus "the stronger will become known." The challenge, in riddle-like terms, asks that the selected retainer be neither black nor white, neither brown, yellow, nor dappled—which seems to make little sense when speaking of a man.

On the herald's arrival at Erech with this new challenge, Enmerkar bids him return to Aratta with a three-part message: (1) He (Enmerkar) accepts the *en* of Aratta's challenge and is prepared to send one of his own retainers to fight his representative to a decision. (2) He demands that the *en* of Aratta heap up gold, silver, and precious stones for the goddess Inanna in Erech. (3) He once again threatens Aratta with total destruction unless its *en* and its people bring "stones of the mountain" to build and decorate the Eridu shrine for him.

In the first part of the message, Enmerkar's words appear to clear up the lord of Aratta's riddle-like terms about the color of the retainer to be selected. Enmerkar substitutes the word "garment" for "fighting man." Presumably, the colors were meant to refer to garments worn by the combatants rather than to their bodies.

A remarkable passage follows which, if correctly interpreted, informs us that Enmerkar was, in the opinion of the poet, the first to write on clay tablets and that he did so because his herald seemed "heavy of mouth" and unable to repeat the message, perhaps because of its length. The herald delivers the inscribed tablet to the *en* of Aratta and awaits his answer. But help now seems to come to the *en* from an unexpected source. The Sumerian god of rain and storm, Ishkur, brings to Aratta wild wheat and beans and heaps them up before the *en*. At the sight of the wheat the *en* takes courage. His confidence regained, he informs Enmerkar's herald that Inanna had by no means abandoned Aratta or her house and bed there.

From here on, the text becomes fragmentary and the context difficult to follow, except for the statement that the people of Aratta did bring gold, silver, and lapis lazuli to Erech and heaped them up in the courtyard of Eanna for Inanna.

In another Sumerian epic poem, which consists of close to three hundred lines and which has been only partially published to date, we again find Enmerkar, the *en* of Erech, in a bitter contest with an *en* of Aratta, but with one in this case who bears the good Sumerian name Ensukushsiranna. Its plot, very briefly put, is as follows.

In the days when a certain Ennamibaragga-Utu was king of an empire presumably including Sumer and parts of ancient Iran, Ensukushsiranna, the *en* of Aratta, issued a challenge to Enmerkar, the *en* of Erech, demanding that the latter recognize him as his overlord and that the goddess Inanna be brought to Aratta. Enmerkar is contemptuous of the challenge and in a long address, in which he depicts himself as the favorite of the gods, declares that Inanna will remain in Erech and demands that Ensukushsiranna become his vassal. Ensukushsiranna gathers the members of his council and asks them for advice. They counsel him to submit to Enmerkar, but this he indignantly refuses to do. Where-

upon the *mashmash*-priest of Aratta comes to his aid and boasts that he will subdue Erech—and indeed, all the lands “above and below, from the sea to the cedar mountain”—by his magical power. Ensukushsiranna is delighted and gives him five minas of gold and five minas of silver as well as the necessary supplies. The *mashmash* arrives in Erech in due course but is outwitted by the goddess Nidaba’s two shepherds and a wise old crone by the name of Sagburru, who finally kills him and throws his dead body into the Euphrates. When Ensukushsiranna hears of what has befallen his *mashmash*, he hurriedly sends a messenger to Enmerkar and capitulates completely, admitting abjectly that Enmerkar is his superior.

Another Sumerian epic tale whose contents are revealing of the extraordinarily close political, religious, and cultural contacts between Erech and Aratta is one which may be entitled “Lugalbanda and Enmerkar.” It consists of approximately four hundred lines, and the relevant details of its plot are as follows.

Lugalbanda, one of the heroes of Erech belonging to Enmerkar’s military entourage, has just returned to Erech from a perilous journey, only to find his lord and liege in great distress. For many years past, the Semitic Martu have been ravaging both Sumer and Uri (roughly the later Akkad). Now they are laying siege to Erech itself, and Enmerkar finds that he must get a call for help through to his sister (none other than the goddess Inanna of Aratta). But he can find no one to undertake the dangerous journey to Aratta to deliver the message. Whereupon Lugalbanda steps up to his king and bravely volunteers for the task. Upon Enmerkar’s insistence on secrecy, he swears that he will make the journey alone unaccompanied by his followers. After receiving from Enmerkar the exact words of his message to Inanna, Lugalbanda hastens to his friends and followers and informs them of his imminent journey. They try to dissuade him, but with no success. He takes up his weapons, crosses the seven mountains that reach from one end of Anshan to the other—or, as the poet puts it, “from the ‘shoulder’ of Anshan to the ‘head’ of Anshan”—and finally arrives with joyful step at his destination.

In Aratta, Lugalbanda is given a warm welcome by Inanna. She asks what has brought him all alone from Erech to Aratta, and he repeats verbatim Enmerkar’s message and call for help.

Inanna's answer is obscure; it seems to involve a river and the river's unusual fish which Enmerkar is to catch; also involved are certain water vessels which he is to fashion. Enmerkar does as directed, and the poem closes with a paean of praise to Aratta, which seems to have supplied Enmerkar with metal- and stone-workers.

The contents of the three Sumerian epic tales sketched above are of unusual significance for the light they shed on the otherwise practically unknown ancient Iranian city-state of Aratta; they provide us with a number of revealing details regarding Aratta's political organization, economy, and religion, all of which are quite new and unexpected. Thus we find, according to our Sumerian poet, that the political head of Aratta, just as in the Sumerian city-state of Erech, was a military and religious leader known as the *en* and that he bore a Sumerian name. We also find that there were other high political officials in Aratta with such Sumerian titles as *ensi*, *sukkal*, *shatam*, *ragaba*, and *ugula*; and that Aratta, like the Sumerian city-state, had an advisory assembly, whose opinion, however, could be ignored by the city's ruler if he felt disposed to do so.

In regard to religion, we learn that the Sumerian pantheon was worshipped in Aratta. Its tutelary deity was the Sumerian goddess Inanna who, to judge from the first of our epic poems, "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta," was only later made the "Queen of Eanna" in Erech by Enmerkar. Another favorite deity of Aratta was Dumuzi—long known as a deified ruler of Erech—the shepherd who, according to the Sumerian mythographers, became Inanna's beloved and death-doomed husband. The god Enki, on the other hand, whose special protégé Enmerkar seems to have been, was rather inimically disposed toward Aratta and its *en*.

Aratta's economic wealth, to judge from our poems, consisted primarily of gold, silver, and all kinds of stone; it was noted, moreover, for its skilled metal- and stone-workers, its masons and sculptors. It was for this reason, no doubt, that the rulers of Erech, a region destitute of stones and metals, were eager to add Aratta to their domain. On the other hand, Aratta was not rich in grain, which Erech had in surplus—hence, perhaps, the readiness on the part of her people to yield to Erech in spite of the wishes of their ruler.

Let us now turn to the geographic indications in our poems and try to figure out the probable location of Aratta on the map. First of all, we are reasonably certain that Aratta was located in Iran, since our poems depict it as separated from Erech, in southern Mesopotamia, by the entire land of Anshan, from its "shoulder" to its "head," and Anshan, most scholars agree, is situated in southwestern Iran. A problem arises, however, in trying to locate Aratta in relation to Anshan. Is it to be sought north of Anshan in the direction of Lake Urmia and the Caspian Sea, or to the east in the direction of Baluchistan and India, or to the south in the direction of Laristan and the Persian Gulf? Once again, it is a Sumerian epic tale which may give us the answer. This poem, which may be entitled "Lugalbanda and Mount Hurum," remained largely unintelligible until 1955, when a large six-column tablet from the Hilprecht Collection of the Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena became available; it tells the following story.

Enmerkar, the lord of Erech, has decided to journey to Aratta in order to make it a vassal state. Accompanied by a vast host of Erechites under the command of seven unnamed heroes and Lugalbanda, who, to quote the words of the poem, "was their eighth," he arrives at Mount Hurum. Then and there Lugalbanda falls ill. His brothers and friends do all they can to revive him, but to no avail. Taking him for dead, they decide that they will leave his corpse on Mount Hurum, proceed on their journey to Aratta, and on their return from the campaign, pick up his body and carry it back to Erech. But Lugalbanda is not dead. Abandoned and forsaken, he prays to the gods of the sun, moon, and the Venus star, and they restore his health. He wanders all over the highland steppe, and there we must leave him for the present, since our available texts break off at this point.

It is clear from this poem that Mount Hurum was situated somewhere between Erech and Aratta, and since it is not unreasonable to assume that Mount Hurum was the original home of the Hurrian people from the neighborhood of Lake Van, we may conclude that Aratta lay in the vicinity of Lake Urmia or perhaps even farther east. In fact, Enmerkar's campaign to Aratta might be compared to some extent with that of Sargon II more than two thousand years later (714 B.C.) to the land of the Mannai, the account of which, interestingly enough, mentions the

crossing of a river called Aratta, a name reminiscent, perhaps, of the city Aratta.

From mountain-perched Aratta near the Caspian Sea, let us turn to two lands which often go together in the inscriptions, Magan and Meluhha; their location is still in doubt, although they may turn out to be Egypt and Ethiopia. In fact, most cuneiformists agree that by the first millennium B.C. Magan and Meluhha did correspond roughly to Egypt and Ethiopia. It is for the earlier periods—for the days of Sargon the Great, Gudea, and the Third Dynasty of Ur, for example—that this identification has been generally thought to be most unlikely, since it would involve the seemingly incredible assumption that the peoples of those early days had seagoing ships that could reach the east coast of Africa. This has led to the hypothesis that over the millennia there was a shift in toponymy, that is, that in the third and second millennia B.C. the names Magan and Meluhha corresponded to the lands bordering the east and southeast Arabian coasts but that for one reason or another these names were later transferred to Egypt and Ethiopia.

Now methodologically speaking, the verification of a hypothesis involving a name shift in the cuneiform documents for countries of such recognized importance as those referred to by the names Magan and Meluhha should be based on evidence that is reasonably assured and decisive. But as of today, there does not seem to me to be that kind of evidence; there is still a strong possibility, as will become evident from what follows, that there was no toponymic shift and that Magan and Meluhha correspond more or less to Egypt and Ethiopia in the third millennium B.C. as well as in the first millennium.

Magan and Meluhha are mentioned in both Sumerian and Akkadian texts from at least the time of Sargon the Great down to the middle of the first millennium B.C. Sargon the Great, in his own inscriptions, writes that the boats of Magan, Meluhha, and Dilmun rode at anchor in his capital, Agade. His grandson, Naram-Sin, captured Manium, the king of Magan, brought back booty from Magan, and had stones quarried there; a number of alabaster vases dedicated by Naram-Sin and inscribed with the words "booty of Magan" have been excavated. Gudea writes that he obtained diorite for his statues from Magan and wood for the